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Acquiring Minds Want to Know -- Digital Scholarship

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However, it may be that the real future for "eBooks" is their inevitable morphing into electronic data files that will be integrated with other electronic content, perhaps by aggregators like **Bell & Howell's Proquest**. Projects that fold e-texts into curriculum packages are slowly gaining acceptance by academic faculties.

An interesting development at the **University of Chicago Press** indicates that a dominant eBook model may have emerged. The **University of Chicago Press** has been granted \$1.5 million by the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** to launch the **Chicago Digital Distribution Center**, comprising both the first short-run digital print facility operated through an American university press and the **BiblioVault**, an electronic repository for backlist and current university press titles.

The grant will support the development of the **Chicago Digital Distribution Center (CDDC)** and the **BiblioVault**, as well as the preparation of 5,000 books for short-run digital printing and, eventually, for online searching. The **CDDC** will serve not only Chicago but also the many scholarly presses served by the **Chicago Distribution Center (CDC)**. This new facility will keep books with low demand available and will allow university presses to bring back out-of-print titles as demand warrants,


ensuring that the scholarly community will always have access to work critical to ongoing research and teaching.

In spite of the electronic content explosion, libraries are still buying books. An increasing number of libraries are responding to the budget crunch and stretching their funds by having their books delivered shelf-ready from their book vendors. Libraries can utilize the economies of scale offered by booksellers to get mainstream titles cataloged and processed so they are available for shelving when they arrive. A number of the booksellers I surveyed volunteered that the percentage of books that going through their processing departments reached record levels this year. At **Blackwell** the percentage has gone from 18 in 1998 to 31 last year.

The beauty of outsourcing technical processing of books is that it creates fiscal savings that are demonstrable. University administrators, often chided by business leaders for their lack of financial management savvy, point with pride to the library as a showcase for streamlined workflows and cost effective resource management. Outsourcing library technical services is becoming the most credible way to provide more-with-less. And the upside to outsourcing is that when the good times return to libraries, a well-managed outsourcing plan allows the library to ramp up the volume of purchases without worrying about the load on library support staff.

Rush Miller, director of Hillman Library at the **University of Pittsburgh**, and a great champion of library efficiency though effective change management has this to say about his library's experience in partnering with suppliers:

At the University Library System, **University of Pittsburgh**, we downsized our technical services department by more than 50%, and saved more than one million dollars, while increasing dramatically our throughput by using the shelf-ready vendor services. We are very pleased with the services we receive and recommend this approach to making technical services functions more cost effective for every academic library.

Was this the year of the economy, of e-content, of vanishing eBooks, or of shelf-ready processing finally becoming mainstream? Yes, but most of all it was a year of change. I suspect that will be the description for many years to come. 

Endnotes

1. Primary Research Group, "Survey of Academic Libraries." 2001 and 2002 editions.
2. "Study shows academic libraries are buying fewer books." *Library Journal Academic Newswire*, Sept. 5, 2002.



Acquiring Minds Want to Know — Digital Scholarship

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Digital Scholarship

A new form of scholarship has emerged in recent years named "digital scholarship." I have seen it defined as online publishing or digitized material presented online, or, in other words, scholarship that appears in a digital form. However, a more compelling definition treats it as scholarship that depends entirely on being digital, i.e., it is created, carried out, and disseminated entirely digitally. In essence, it is not possible without digital technology.

This is an important distinction. Many scholarly materials can be converted to a digital format, and as desirable as that is, most of them function quite well without being digital. Scholarship that is dependent on being digital is different. It is often highly visual and visually oriented. It may contain text but may also be a study of text. It may combine many different data types, systems, and software. Often digital scholarship takes the form of stand alone projects that are not integrated with other digital works. However, there may be nothing that prevents this from happening, rather, by being digital, the possibilities for collaboration, sharing, or re-purposing are enormous.

Digital scholarship has evolved as scholars began to realize the potential of digital technology to transform their work, both research and teaching. The results of digital scholarship are displayed and disseminated digitally, often through a specially developed Website. The results may never be published in a peer reviewed journal or in a scholarly monograph. Information about, or deriving from, the project, may be published. This change in publishing and dissemination of results is part of what makes digital scholarship so different from digitized scholarship.

Many good examples have come out of the **Institute for Advanced Technology** in the Humanities, a center at the **University of Virginia** that is housed in the library. Its goal is "to explore and expand the potential of information technology as a tool for humanities research. To that end, we provide our Fellows with consulting, technical support, applications programming, and networked publishing facilities. We also cultivate partnerships and participate in humanities computing initiatives with libraries, publishers, information technology companies, scholarly organizations, and others interested in

the intersection of computers and cultural heritage." (<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/>)

One of their more famous projects is that of **Edward L. Ayres**, *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*. This ambitious work captures the experience of two different communities, one Northern and one Southern, throughout the Civil War. It was conceived as a hypermedia archive of newspapers, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, church records, population census, agricultural census, and military records. The site says that "Students can explore every dimension of the conflict and write their own histories, reconstructing the life stories of women, African Americans, farmers, politicians, soldiers, and families. The project is intended for secondary schools, community colleges, libraries, and universities." (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/choosepart.html#story>)

The Valley of the Shadow combines new and digitized sources to create a new work of scholarship. It gains part of its appeal and strength by melding teaching and research — an excellent example of how digital forms of scholar-

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ship can achieve the goals of integration and multi-purposing of material.


Another initiative that promotes many innovative projects is the **Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI)**. ECAI focuses on global mapping, imagery, and texts to provide access to "research based on digital technology which presents complex combinations of data from multiple disciplines visually and immediately." (<http://www.ecai.org/>) Based at **UC-Berkeley** and under the Dean of International and Area Studies, ECAI often deals with materials from or about other countries or regions of the world, but not exclusively. In fact, the *Valley of the Shadow* has a project component with ECAI. ECAI supports research into new technologies and infrastructures, develops standards, and sponsors conferences. It also acts as a collective where participants can list information about and provide links to their projects. Some are ECAI developed projects and are hosted at the ECAI site. Additionally ECAI collaborates with the **California Digital Library's eScholarship** program, another locus of new scholarship (<http://www.escholarship.cdlib.org/>).

The **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** has been a strong supporter of digital scholarship, particularly that which is created in the humanities and social sciences. **Don Waters**, Program Officer for **Scholarly Communication**, has often spoken about the projects that they have sponsored. Their scholarly communication program supports digital scholarship because of the impact it may have on the current system of conducting and communicating research.

Unfortunately, scholarship of this nature is still so new that often it goes unrecognized and unrewarded in the promotion and tenure process. The younger scholars who have grown up with computers, and are most likely to experiment with and engage in this new form of scholarship, are discouraged from exploring and developing this path. ECAI is tackling this dilemma head on. On their Website they state, "We are entering into a dialogue with university administrators to ensure that ECAI publications are just as acceptable as books and articles to the people who make hiring and tenure decisions. In this way, we hope to create a climate that allows young scholars to publish in the medium that is most meaningful and intellectually exciting to them." Let us hope that the recognition afforded by awards such as those made by the **Mellon Foundation** or by being part of ECAI will begin to change the system and will allow digital scholarship to flourish.

Libraries are becoming more supportive of and engaged with scholars in the creation of digital research and dissemination of its results for several reasons. For one, librarians

often have useful skills to apply, such as the creation of metadata schemes. For another, librarians have become increasingly involved in the research of faculty and the teaching of information literacy to their students. Librarians also have a strong and vested interest in fostering movements that have the potential to change the current system of scholarly communication. Libraries also have some of the equipment and space necessary to set up these projects, having carved out these resources for digital reformatting of library collections. Last but not least, librarians are in the business of preserving scholarly materials in many formats, and the best way to preserve digital scholarship may be to actively participate in its entire life cycle.

The current drive by libraries to create institutional repositories has not yet grappled with the complexity of true digital scholarship. Institutional repositories more often than not are starting to try to capture and preserve more text based and simple forms of digital works. Digital scholarship will require an exceptional level of commitment and risk for libraries over time. Will our efforts be worth it? The scholars will surely let us know. 

(Note: See also the November 2002 *ATG* article by **Tony Ferguson** (p. 94). He touched on a few aspects of digital scholarship and mentions the *ECAI Silk Road* project in his discussion on *GIS*.)

A Recipe for a Successful Digital Archive: Collection Development for Digital Archives

by **John McDonald** (Acquisitions Librarian, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91125; Phone: 626-395-6427; Fax: 626-792-7540) <john@library.caltech.edu>

At the **2002 Charleston Conference** this past November, I was fortunate to sit on a panel addressing issues in Digital Archives. Along with my presentation about **Caltech's Digital Archive** initiative, **CODA** (<http://library.caltech.edu/coda>), the panel included presentations by librarians at **MIT** about their **DSpace** project (<https://hpsds1.mit.edu/index.jsp>), from **Ohio State** about their **Knowledge Bank** (<http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu/KBinfo/>), and from director of production at **JSTOR** (<http://www.jstor.org>). This session highlighted the varying approaches that academic libraries and non-profit institutions are taking towards digital archiving of materials.

These project descriptions have led me to believe that we are at the right point to shift the focus of digital archive development from the technical to the methodological. We now need to apply collection development techniques to digital archives to make them useful, utilized, and important. I originally wrote that **Caltech's** recipe for building our digital archive project included six ingredients: an entrepreneurial attitude, iterative process, learning to communicate, collaboration, defining and redefining roles, and patience. The new recipe will include a seventh ingredient: content.

Basic issues for digital archive development have in the past focused on technology — how to get an archive up and running, how to maintain it, how to fund it, how to staff it, etc. Most of these technical issues have now been solved or are being tackled on a grand scale (**Eprints**, **DSpace**, etc.) and there are now multiple

technological approaches to building a digital archive. Content has not been at the forefront of digital archive projects in the recent past, but now should be. Some digital archive projects have been scattershot out of necessity — items placed in the archive were readily available, easy to put there, either since they were already digital documents or were the easiest to convert, or were unique items that received special funding to convert (maps, images, etc.). Focusing on content, just like libraries in general, is what will drive digital archive projects in the future. Digital archives will be needed and used only if the content is relevant, accessible, and properly promoted. Digital archives are not only archival projects in the traditional sense but also libraries and need to apply principles of each to develop a common theory of digital archive collection development.

Collection development is built around the identification and evaluation of materials based on demand, quality, cost, and other local factors including storage and access points, both physical and bibliographic. The number one consideration for selection of materials for inclusion in a collection is demand from the primary user group, for current or future use. Selectors define their primary (i.e., faculty and students), secondary (i.e., community members), and tertiary (i.e., other libraries) user groups and select items that they feel meet the needs of those users. This demand is balanced with quality of the material and its cost — both initial and ongoing costs of the item and its processing and storage. In addition, local factors, such as space, language, and the ability to access the item (physical or bibliographic) can be taken into consideration.

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